

Econ Dev Newsletter



High Street Corridor Update



Ellsworth
The FRIENDLY CITY

KEY:

BUILD=Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development
MDOT=Maine Department of Transportation
RCAP=Rural Community Assistance Partnership
SAP=Safety Action Plan
SS4A=Safe Streets for All
TCP=Thriving Communities Program
USDOT=US Department of Transportation

High Street Corridor Information & Updates Available on City Website

Please [visit the dedicated High Street Corridor page on the City website](#) for project updates, background information, meeting materials, and answers to frequently asked questions as they become available.

Thank you to Amy, our Director of Communications, for creating and maintaining this hub and helping ensure residents have access to timely, transparent information every step of the way.

Just over a month ago, the City held a stakeholder meeting to listen to and document concerns over the preliminary High Street Corridor study provided by Stantec as part of the USDOT Thriving Communities Program. That evening, we committed to providing an opt-in monthly update for the duration of our USDOT technical support grant to increase communication with the Ellsworth community. In this newsletter, I share a few updates with you.

High Street Corridor Addendum

In response to stakeholder concerns, the City has asked Stantec to consider alternative recommendations to the study as part of their final report that would reflect several revisions. Of note, RCAP Solutions requested a potential increase to our sub award from the USDOT to cover the addendum so the City would not have to spend extra money.

The City proposed showing alternative options that include reevaluating the proposed major lane reductions (four lanes becoming two); the Beals Ave. road closure; and adjustments to the curb changes at the entrance to Merrill Lane, specifically along the side of Merrill Furniture.

All other planning-level concepts would stay intact and are under consideration. To clarify, obtaining the alternative recommendations does not mean those items will never be considered in the future – especially if/when the City were to apply for a larger, fully subsidized BUILD grant – but the alternative recommendations reflect stakeholder feedback and allow the City to focus on immediate safety considerations, such as the addition of pedestrian crossings along the High Street corridor.

The final report, including the alternative recommendations, is expected back from Stantec by the end of August. The City will post it on our website when it becomes available.



Safe Streets for All (SS4A) USDOT Grant

Following approval from City Council at the May 18, 2026 meeting, with wonderful technical assistance from our RCAP Solutions team, the City submitted a SS4A Planning and Demonstration grant to the USDOT for \$100,000 with a 20% City match.

If approved, this grant will fund development of a city-wide, comprehensive Safety Action Plan that incorporates more detailed supplemental planning activities such as traffic and engineering studies, and ongoing public engagement. It also would fund two demonstration projects in two MDOT verified “high crash” areas in the City.

Per the crash data, possible considerations for these sites are the road split of Downeast Highway and High Street, and the Bucksport Rd./Surry Rd. intersection.

Grant approval times currently vary quite a bit at the federal level, so the City may not hear back for 6-12 months. While this grant is not High Street Corridor specific, the Safety Action Plan would include it as a priority corridor in the city with existing safety concerns.

Additional Transit Stops on High Street

As part of the Thriving Communities Program scope of work, the City, RCAP Solutions, and Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPN) are exploring options for increased transit stops along High Street that would encourage multimodal transportation, make shopping easier for residents using transit, reduce traffic, and extend more affordable transportation opportunities.

Stay tuned for a community survey that will help inform if there is a need for more stops, and where they would be most useful!

Your input and feedback remains critical to this process. Please reach out via email (tfisher@ellsworthmaine.gov) with any questions or concerns, or schedule a time to meet in person.

Warm regards,

Twila Fisher
Economic Development Director
City of Ellsworth



A Reminder:

Our next stakeholder meeting is planned for August 25, 2026 at 4pm in City Hall Council Chambers. A virtual option will also be provided closer to the time.

